



File Code: 1950
Date: October 29, 2019

Dear Interested Party:

The Forest Service is beginning an environmental analysis to add large wood to five streams and their tributaries on the Marienville Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest. These five streams and their tributaries currently lack sufficient large wood to create quality pools, slow flood flows, or store sediment and organic debris. All five of these streams have acidic water conditions from acid rain, which has reduced the presence of native fish, including eastern brook trout. The addition of large wood to these stream channels would store organic matter and nutrients, which, in turn, would help reduce the presence of toxic dissolved inorganic aluminum in these streams, and increase the biological diversity and abundance in these streams. One of the goals and objectives of the Forest Plan is to provide a sustainable supply of large wood to streams (75 to 380 pieces per stream mile). The table below, along with the attached maps, shows the locations of the project proposal.

Stream	Miles	Warrants	Township	County
Gurgling Run	2.8	4134, 4135	Millstone	Elk
		4130, 4136	Jenks	Forest
East Branch Millstone Creek	2.8	4129, 4135	Millstone	Elk
		4130	Jenks	Forest
Steck Run	1.7	2362, 2369, 2667	Millstone	Elk
Church Run	1.5	2581, 2596, 2792, Robert Allison	Millstone	Elk
Winlack Run	0.5	2542, 2543	Millstone	Elk

The project is located in Management Areas 2.2 – Late Structural Linkages and 3.0 – Even-aged Management. The responsible official for this project, known as the **Millsteck Large Wood Additions** project, is Robert T. Fallon, Marienville District Ranger. Comments regarding this project are requested by December 2, 2019. This 30-day period may be the only opportunity for comment before a decision is made.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service is proposing to reduce flood peaks by diverting flows to side channels and improve stream habitat by felling up to 70 trees per mile into these five streams and their tributaries (9.3 stream miles total) and onto their floodplains. Level 1 treatments would use chainsaws only to fell trees into stream channels. Level 2 treatments would use a combination of chainsaws and a grip hoist or winch to place the wood in the channels. Some minor disturbance of the organic layer of the soils would be caused where the grip-hoist or winch is used to position the large wood in the stream channel. Heavy equipment will not be used for this project, and except for operational safety, live hemlock or white pine will not be felled for this project.



Stream	Level 1	Level 2	Total (miles)
Gurgling Run	0.7	2.1	2.8
East Branch Millstone Creek	2.6	0.2	2.8
Steck Run	1.1	0.6	1.7
Church Run	0.4	1.1	1.5
Winlack Run	0.0	0.5	0.5
Total	4.8	4.5	9.3

A severe flooding event occurred on Winlack Run on June 13, 2019. This flood event caused the stream materials placed in the newly installed culvert on Township Road 302 to get flushed out and caused erosion of the channel over 0.5 miles of stream. If large wood structures had been placed in the stream corridor upstream of this culvert, they could have reduced the severity of the flood damage by diverting the peak flows and slowing the velocity of the water. The culvert at Gurgling Run on Forest Road 131 is to be replaced in the near future. Large wood structures on this stream would also help protect the culvert at Gurgling Run on Forest Road 228. Millstone Township is also planning on replacing the culvert at Church Run on the River Road in the near future. Large wood structures in the headwaters of this stream would help to reduce flood peaks on Church Run.

Type of Review

The proposed action falls within category of exclusion 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 220.6(e)(6). This category is used for "Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction" (36 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) § 220.6(e)(6)). A project or case file and decision memo are required for this category.

The analysis will consider whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further consideration in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Resource conditions that will be considered include: federally listed threatened or endangered species and Forest Service sensitive species; floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds; Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, and national recreation areas; inventoried roadless areas; research natural areas; American Indian and Alaska Native religious and cultural sites; and archaeological sites, and historical properties and areas (36 CFR 220.6 (b)). The mere presence of one or more of these conditions does not preclude use of the category. The degree of the potential effect determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist.

If a categorical exclusion is applied, a decision may be signed as early as November 2019. A decision memo would be prepared and announced with a news release. The decision memo would also be posted on the Allegheny National Forest website and distributed by mail or email to those who comment on or express interest in the project.

Administrative Review

Decisions that are categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement are not subject to objection before a decision is made or appeal afterward. As a result, unless an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement is prepared, this project will not be subject to the notice, comment, or administrative review opportunities that were previously applied to similar projects.

Opportunity to Comment

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments will be considered. Comments received after this date will be considered to the extent that time allows. Comments received, including names and addresses of those who submitted comments, will be considered part of the public record and will be

available for public inspection.

- Written comments may be mailed or hand-delivered to Robert T. Fallon, District Ranger, Marienville Ranger District, 131 Smokey Lane, Marienville, PA 16239.
- Written comments submitted by facsimile may be sent to 814-927-2285.
- Verbal comments may be provided by calling (814) 927-5700. Business hours for those submitting hand-delivered or oral comments are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p. m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
- Electronic comments must be submitted in plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), or Microsoft Word format to comments-eastern-allegheny-marienville@usda.gov. Please enter the project name (*Millsteck Large Wood Additions project*) on the subject line.

For More Information

This letter and its enclosures are available on the Allegheny National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57079>. Additional information is also available from Kevin Treese, Planning Team Leader, who may be contacted by telephone at 814-927-5759 or email at kevin.treese@usda.gov.

Sincerely,



ROB FALLON
District Ranger